

Letter to the Church in Ephesus

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Revelation 2:1-7

This is the first in a series of lessons on the seven churches of Asia addressed in Revelation 2-3. Through John, Jesus sent a letter to each church, which He also shared with the others and with us as well. The letters described challenges they were facing, what they were doing well, what they needed to correct, and more. In studying these seven letters, every church can find encouragement and/or warnings that apply to them. We will notice these as we go through our study.

About the City of Ephesus

- Location of the temple of Artemis/Diana (Acts 19:35) – one of the seven wonders of the world
- Center of trade in Asia – well-connected (Acts 19:9-10)
- Paul spent a lot of time preaching here (Acts 19:8-10; 20:31)
- Paul warned of apostasy that would be coming (Acts 20:29-30)
- Timothy was left here to preach and combat the beginnings of apostasy (1 Timothy 1:3-4)

Letter to the Church

- Description of Jesus – holds seven stars, walks among seven golden lampstands (v. 1); reminder of His power and His awareness of the state of the churches
- Current circumstances – evil men and false apostles threatened them (v. 2); Paul warned about this (Acts 20:29-30)
- Commendations – toil and perseverance, cannot tolerate evil men, test false apostles (v. 2); perseverance and endurance (v. 3); hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans (v. 6)
- Condemnations – left their first love (v. 4); the Lord must come first (Matthew 22:36-38); called to repentance (v. 5), by doing the deeds they did at first; follow the original standard (2 Timothy 1:13)
- Punishment for sin – remove their lampstand (v. 5); they would lose their recognition as the Lord's church
- Reward for faithfulness – grant to eat of the tree of life in the Paradise of God (v. 7); this is the reward foreshadowed at the end of the book (Revelation 22:1-5)

Main Lesson

- Remember why – this church was commended for many things; they remembered WHAT they were to do, but forgot WHY they were to do these things; their motivation needed to be to please and honor Christ and they lost sight of that; it was possible to

do right because of tradition, pride, family history, peer pressure, etc.; if they did not correct their mindset, they would lose their designation as a church of Christ

- This is the lesson for us today – we need to know WHY we do what we do; we must hold fast to the pattern (2 Timothy 1:13) and do all things by Christ's authority (Colossians 3:17); yet if our motivation is not right, our good deeds can be in vain (1 Corinthians 13:1-3); love for Christ will motivate us to obey Him (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3); but obedience without love is pointless and will eventually wane

Conclusion

- It is important that we continue to stand for the truth, oppose error, and endure hardships – but we need to remember WHY we do that; it is because we love the Lord and want to please Him
- If we love the Lord, we will obey Him (John 14:15) – that needs to be what continually motivates us